

The Scripture Account of the Cause and Inten-  
tion of Earthquakes,

IN A

# S E R M O N

Preached at the

## O L D - J U R Y ,

M A R C H 11, 1749-50,

ON

Occasion of the two Shocks of an Earthquake, the  
first on *February 8*, the other on *March 8*.

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By SAMUEL CHANDLER.

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*Etenim hæc Deorum immortalium vox, hæc penè oratio  
judicanda est, cum ipse mundus, cum aer, atque terræ,  
motu quodam novo contremiscunt, et insitato aliquid sono  
incredibile prædicunt.*

CICER. de Harusp. Resp. fine.

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— жи́вёт в се́верной Азии и Европе.

МОЛЛЫ

МУРАВЬИ

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## JOB ix. 5, 6.

*Who removeth the Mountains, and they know not:  
Who overturneth them in his Anger, who  
shaketh the Earth out of her Place, and the  
Pillars thereof tremble.*

**T**O such who believe the universal Providence of God, and that nothing happens without his Knowledge, or contrary to his Permission, the Improvement of extraordinary and surprising Events to religious and moral Purposes, will not be unacceptable; nor will they censure it as irrational and superstitious, to introduce the divine Agency and Power, as concerned in the Production of such Events, though they may sometimes fall out according to the established Laws of Nature; because they consider these Laws as originally fixed by God, and the Effects arising from them as taking place, when, and where he pleased, by virtue of his original Appointment. We think we act a truly rational Part, when we pray to God for our daily Bread, and praise him for the constant Supplies of Life, which we receive from him, not by any immediate and extraordinary Interposition of his Providence, but by the regular and ordinary Course of Nature. And tho' the various Seasons of the Year, Seed-time and Harvest, Summer and Winter, all succeed each other by the stated Revolutions of our Earth round the Sun; yet who, that believes a God, and his Providence, doth not consider these common Events as owing to an original divine Disposition, and the constant Influence of his Almighty Power on the material System,

*who is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in Working* ; or can help breaking out into that devout Acknowledgment : \* *Thou, even thou, art Lord alone, thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Host; the Earth, and all Things that are therein, and thou preservest them all.* It cannot therefore be contrary to the Dictates of Reason, as I am sure it is perfectly consistent with the Spirit of genuine Piety, seriously to take notice of those more uncommon Effects that happen in the Course of Providence, which are in their Nature astonishing, that create an inward Terror, which have been frequently attended with the most dreadful Calamities, and owned by all civilized Nations, as signal Marks of the Displeasure of God, and the awful Punishments of his Justice for the Impieties and Vices of Mankind.

You will easily perceive I have been led into these Reflections, by those two Concussions of the Earth, by which we have been alarmed in and about this great City principally, in the Space of one Month; that of the last Week happening on the same Day, just four Weeks after the former, and which, according to all Accounts I have received, was much more violent than the first. And why should Accidents of this kind be intirely over-looked? This repeated Shock is very unusual amongst us. It is at least worth considering, whether or no, or for what, it may be a Warning to us from the God of Nature. Were we not surprized and greatly terrified, when we felt this strange Commotion of the Earth, and when our Beds, our Doors, and every Thing round about us, seemed in a convulsive Agitation and Trembling? When we heard that Roar, that Bellowing of Nature, like the Sound of Thunder rolling at a distance, or the Noise of mighty Waters? For this was the Noise, that sounded

\* Nehem. ix. 6.

sounded dreadful in my Ears. But why should we be afraid, if when the Earth trembles it suggests no Cause of Terror? The Panick is absurd and unmanly, that hath nothing but Imagination to support it. But if there be somewhat truly awful in such Events, if the shaking the Pillars of Heaven be indeed enough to shake these poor crazy Fabricks of Clay in which we dwell, and we cannot help shuddering throughout our whole Frame, when the Globe itself is tottering under us; let us consider what just Reflections such Events will suggest, and how we may best improve them to our own Comfort and Safety. If Job be not mistaken, God is worthy to be acknowledged in them; for it is *he removeth the Mountains, and they know not, i. e.* instantly and in a Moment, like Men caught on a sudden in some dreadful and destructive Calamity, before almost they perceive their Ruin, or are capable of thinking from whence it comes. *He overturns them in his Anger, he shakes the Earth out of her Place, and the Pillars thereof tremble.* Which Words will lead us to enquire,

- I. How far the Hand, or Providence of God is concerned in these convulsive Motions of the Earth.
- II. What we may learn of their Intention and Design. And,
- III. The religious and moral Uses to which they may and should be improved.

I. We are to consider how far the Hand, or Providence of God is concerned in these convulsive Motions of the Earth. *It is God, says Job, who removeth the Mountains, and makes the Pillars of the Earth to tremble.* I know I should be told by some Philosophers, both ancient and modern, that it is going too far to impute these Ef-

fects to any thing of a divine Agency, when the proper and immediate Cause is nearer, and to be found in the original and unalterable Constitution of Things themselves ; that they are all natural, and produced wholly by natural Causes, and that to account for them by any other Suppositions is absurd and *enibusfistical*\*. I also well know, that to introduce Almighty God, as concerned in any Events, whether common or extraordinary, is in the same Scheme of Philosophy, all Superstition and Folly ; which *worthy* Scheme seems to be formed with this Design only, to banish God and his Providence, all Sense of Dependence on him, all Fear to offend him, and all Regard to his Favour and Acceptance, wholly out of the Consciences of Men, and the World itself ; and to introduce in the room of these Things, a certain *fatal* or *casual Constitution* of Affairs, absolutely independent on and exclusive of Deity, and without any originally intended Purpose to subserve the Interests of Religion and Morality. But, Thanks be to God, we have not so learnt to reason as Men, nor thus been *taught the Truth as it is in Jesus.*

We did not indeed want to be informed, that these *Phænomena* have their natural Causes, and arise out of the Constitution of the World ; tho' possibly Philosophy and Reason, with all their Sagacity, may frequently be at a loss to assign the real and immediate ones of them ; the Causes of these Succussions not being always, and every where alike, and the greatest Philosophers having differed amongst themselves, as to the Method of accounting for them. Amongst the Ancients †, some

\* Illud quoque proderit præsumere animo, nihil horum Deos facere, nec ira numinum, aut cœlum concuti, aut terram. Suas ita causas habent, nec ex imperio fæviunt, sed ex quibusdam vitiis. Senec. *Nat. Quæst.* l. 6. c. 3.

† Aristot. *de Meteor.* l. 2. c. 7, 8. & Senec. *Nat. Quæst.* l. 6. c. 5. &c.

some ascribed them to large Quantities of Water, which violently moving thro' subterraneous Passages, from one Cavern to another, and being more than those Passages and Caverns can readily admit, caused, by their Force and Pressure, these Tremors of the Earth. Others imagined, that they were occasioned by subterraneous Air, which being pent up in hollow Places of the Earth, moves it by its natural *Conatus* to ascend. Others accounted for them by supposing, strong subterraneous Vapours and Exhalations, excited by the Sun, or the internal Fire and Heat of the Earth ; which rising upwards, and endeavouring to free themselves from their Confinement, shake the Earth in their struggle to disengage themselves from the Caverns that enclosed them. *Pliny* \* delivers it as a Certainty, that they are occasioned by subterraneous Winds, because, as he observes, they generally happen when the Sea is calm, and the Air serene, and the Winds laid, and hid in the Veins and Caverns of the Earth ; and that there is one and the same Cause of the Earth's Tremor, and the Thunder in the Clouds, and that the Opening of the Earth is occasioned by the same means as the Eruption of the Lightning ; viz. by the included Air or Wind, striving to extricate itself from, its Confinement, and obtain its full Liberty. It is also the Opinion of some of our modern Naturalists †, that the material Cause of Thunder, Lightning, and Earthquakes, is one and the same,

*viz.*

\* *Ventos in causa esse non dubium reor ; neque unquam enim intremiscunt terræ, nisi sopito mari, cœloque adeo tranquillo, ut volatus avium non pendeant, subtracto omni spiritu, qui vehit ; nec unquam, nisi post ventos conditos, scilicet in venas & cavernas ejus occulto afflatu ; neque aliud est in terra tremor, quam in nube tonitruum ; nec hiatus aliud, quam cum fulmen erupit, inclusò spiritu luctante, et ad libertatem exire nitente.* *Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 79.*

† *Dr. Mart. Lister. Philosoph. Tran. ab. V. II. p. 420, 421.*

viz. the *inflammable Breath* of the *Pyrites*, which is *Sulphur ex tota Substantia*, and naturally takes Fire of itself; with this Difference, that the one is fired and operates in the Air, for the Production of the former; and the other under Ground, for the effecting of the latter. The Earth unquestionably abounds with *Hollows* of various Degrees, and that these subterraneous Caverns are sometimes full of inflammable Vapours, is sufficiently proved by the Damps in our Mines, which, when fired, do every thing as in an Earthquake, save in a lesser degree. So that frequently the primary, and principal natural Agent in these Convulsions is Fire, which by its Heat raises the Vapours, accelerates their Motion, kindles them into a Flame, and makes their Expansion larger, till the Cavities that contain them become too narrow to confine them; and being pressed on all Sides, the Earth, that covers them, is shaken, and being forced open, yields them a Passage, when they appear in *Vulcanos*, or form themselves into *burning Mountains*. It were easy to enlarge on such a Subject. But it is not my Intention to take up the Time by philosophical Disquisitions of this nature; and therefore I shall only observe, that these Accounts may be partly all \* true, according to the different Nature of the Places where these Succussions happens; which probably are occasioned, sometimes by these Causes united, by the joint Action of Air and Fire, Fire and Water, or the Air, Fire, and Water all conspiring to the same Effect.

But I cannot conceive, how the Operation of these natural Causes is inconsistent with a religious Acknowledgment of God in such Events; or how they

\* *Causam, qua terra concutitur, alii in aqua esse, alii in ignibus, alii in ipsa terra, alii in spiritu putavere, alii in pluribus, alii in omnibus his.* Senec. *Nat. uæst.* l. 6. c. 5.

they exclude him from being even the principal Agent in them. For is not the whole Frame and Composition of the Earth the Effect of his Wisdom and Power? Are not those subterraneous Caverns in it hollowed out by his Hand? Are not all the various *Strata* of it of his laying? Her *Viscera*, the Waters, the Fires, the Minerals, the Exhalations, Winds and Vapours, every Thing she contains, even to her inmost Centre, as to the Matter, the Position, the Quantity of them, the manner of their Operations, and the particular Times and Seasons in which they produce their Effects, all provided, and ordered by him, even from the very Original of the World? If they are, God is really the proper Agent in these and other like natural Effects, and the Operations of the Laws of Nature, are in truth nothing but the Operations of God by those Laws, which he from the first Origin of Nature fixed, which he by his continued Influence constantly maintains in their Activity and Vigour, and which were originally so ordained and regulated by him, as that they should exert themselves, and produce their Effects, in the natural Course of Things, exactly at such Periods, which he had determined, and which he foresaw would be best conducive to answer the great Purposes of his moral Providence and Government. And therefore, when Nations, or Cities are wholly destroyed and swallowed up by the Opening of the Earth, or consumed by the bursting Flames that arise from it, or swept away by an Inundation of Waters that gushes out of it; if Nature was from the Beginning so formed of God, as that these Calamities should happen, in the ordinary Connection of Things, just at such a Period, and exactly at such a Place, and throughout such an Extent, as the very Event itself demonstrates to be the Case; the Consequence is un-

deniable, that these Calamities were of a divine Appointment, and appointed for the Destruction of such particular Persons and Places ; and that they are, and ought to be considered, and owned, as real and certain Effects of God's Agency, as tho' he had destroyed them by an immediate Stroke of his own Hand, or a visible direct Interposition of his almighty and irresistible Power. And in this Sense it is unquestionably true, that God \* *creates Evil*, and that *there is no Evil in a City, but what is done by God.* And in those Places, where these Concussions of the Earth are less violent and fatal, as blessed be God they have been with us, where Men's Habitations have been only shaken, but not subverted, and their Terrors excited, without any Desolation of their Cities, or Destruction of their Persons ; in these Instances, were not the original Causes so moderated and proportioned by the all-wise Creator, as that their Effects should proceed thus far, and no farther ? So that even upon the largest Supposition, that these Concussions happened by the original Laws of Nature, without any immediate Influence from the Author of Nature, yet *God was most certainly in these Earthquakes*, as they were appointed by him, just for that particular Season, when we felt them.

True Philosophy, as well as Religion, assures us of the Truth of that noble and sublime Description of the Wisdom, Prudence, and Knowledge of God in the Formation of the World, that we have in the inspired Prophet. *He + hath measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, and meeted out the Heavens with a Span, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance.* It is but a poor, jejune, absurd, unmeaning

\* Isa. xl. 7. Amos iii. 6. + Isa. xl. 12.

meaning Philosophy, that imputes the Constitution of the Earth to *Chance* or *Fatality*, i. e. properly speaking to *no Cause* at all ; or that imagines a Creator of it, blending together *at Random* a Mass of Things, without due Proportion and Measure, without regard to Situation, or Place, without Fore-sight or Direction of their Operations and Effects, without any original Distribution of those Effects to their proper Seasons, or Intention to answer by them any valuable Ends, especially when productive of any peculiar Advantages, or attended with any remarkable Calamities to Mankind. How much more Dignity is there in the Supposition, that the eternal and all-wise Creature planned out the whole System of Things with the most unerring Skill, adjusted the whole Quantity of Matter, even to a single Atom, of which our Globe consists, as in a Balance, with the most perfect Exactness, and constituted the *Viscera*, the Bowels of the Earth, of such Materials, and in such Measures, liable to such Changes, and subject to such *Action* and *Re-action* upon each other, as that they should, by the Laws he impressed on them, produce such and such Effects, at such and such particular Times and Seasons, and such particular Places of the Globe, as he knew would best answer his own Ends in creating it, throughout the whole Period of its Duration ; and thus make the whole Frame of Nature subservient to moral Purposes, and all the Powers of it execute his Pleasure amongst the Children of Men !

This is the *truly sublime* Doctrine of divine Revelation, which supposes the Connection of natural Causes and Effects, but with a becoming Propriety ascribes them to God as their original Author. \* *Whatever the Lord pleased, that did he in Heaven, and in Earth, in the Seas, and all deep Places.*

*Places. It is he, who causes the Vapours to ascend from the Ends of the Earth, who makes Lightning for the Rain, and brings the Winds out of his Treasures.* \* *He covers the Heaven with Clouds, he prepareth Rain for the Earth, he makes the Grass to grow upon the Mountains, giveth Snow like Wool, scatters the Hoar-Frost like Ashes, casteth forth the Ice like Morsels, sends out his Word and melteth them, and causeth his Winds to blow, and the Waters flow. i. e. He hath established all those Laws of Nature by which these various Effects are in the general Course of Things produced.* But yet this very Establishment is described by Revelation, as directed to providential Purposes, and as contributing to carry on the Designs of his moral Government over Men. For † *he makes the Winds his Messengers, and the flaming Fire, the Lightnings of Heaven, his Ministers.* ‡ *He thundereth with his Voice, saith to the Snow, be thou on the Earth, likewise to the small Rain, and the great Rain of his Strength.* Out of the South comes the Whirlwind, and Cold out of the North. By the Breath of God is the Frost given, he scatters his bright Cloud. He turneth מְסֻבּוֹת their circulating Courses by his Counsels, according to the Works of Men, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the Face of the Earth, whether for Correction, even to his own Land, or for Mercy. || *Fire, Hail, Snow and Vapours, Storms and Winds, all fulfil his Word.*

Not that Revelation supposes, that God absolutely confines himself to the natural Course of Things, can never vary from them, or doth not, upon extraordinary Occasions, by an immediate Influence on them, excite them to produce such Effects, as they would not have done, unless he had

\* Psa. cxlvii. 8, 16, 17. † Psa. civ. 4. ‡ Job xxxvii. 5, 13. || Psa. xlvi. 8.

had given them a new Direction, and had they been permitted to go on in that Train in which they were originally fixed. The Plagues of *Egypt*, will not, I imagine, be accounted for by merely natural Causes. They are represented as the immediate Effects of his Power, \* *who doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and amongst the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand, or say to him, What doest thou?* Every Thing is declared in the sacred Writings to be under the Controul of the Almighty, and the Heavens, and Earth, and all the Powers of Nature represented, as absolutely obedient to his Will, subject to his Direction, and liable to such Changes, as he thinks proper to introduce into them, when any Purposes of Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, and Mercy require it. This Scheme undoubtedly hath a Dignity in it worthy the Majesty and Perfection of the eternal God ; and that he can act without natural Causes, is as certain, as that he can act by them ; that he can over-rule them, as evident, as that he could establish them ; that he can give the Powers of Nature a new Direction, as unquestionable, as his giving them their first. That the ordinary Laws of Nature are sufficient to answer all the Views of God's moral Government, is what no Man can prove, and what it would be Presumption in any to affirm. That he should tie up his own Hands, and leave himself no Power of varying from these Laws, is a Contradiction in Terms, because it is supposing he could limit his own Power, i. e. that he could do what is strictly impossible to be done. That he should resolve never to vary from these Laws, or supersede them, when the Ends of Wisdom and Goodness should require it, is contrary to Wisdom and Goodness ; and it is truly rational to suppose, that as God will

never vary from the Laws of Nature, when the Ends of his Providence can be answered without it, so he will never confine himself to those Laws, when the acting without them, or controuling them, will answer nobler Purposes, than his suffering them to proceed in their regular Course. In what Instances God acts by immediate Interpositions, is difficult to determine. Nor is there any need of it for the Purposes of Religion. It is sufficient to all these, to be assured, that he acts by every natural Cause, that his immediate Interposition is constant, whenever it is necessary, that his Providence over-rules all the Events of Good and Evil, that he is to be acknowledged in them all, and his Design in them to be seriously considered and carefully complied with. And this leads us more particularly to enquire.

II. Into the great Intention of these extraordinary Events, and what we may learn from Reason and Revelation, as to the Design of these Commotions and Agitations of the Earth, which it pleases God, in the Course of his Providence, to permit. Tho' the double Shock, which we have felt, should have had their Causes from the first Formation of the World, and were intended, by the Operation of those Causes, to happen in our Days; yet surely it was not only to set us about enquiring into the natural Reasons of them, or to excite in us vain and uninfluencing Terrors; but for Purposes more worthy his Character, who ordained and permits them, and suitable to our Natures and Circumstances, who are more immediately concerned in, and affected by them. Every one will allow,

I. That these Events are very awful and terrifying in their Nature, and apt to strike our Minds with Horror. What is there that we can think

think of more stable than the Foundations of the Earth, which as the Psalmist tells us, are \* *so laid, as that they shall not be removed for ever.* And by human Power they can never be shaken. But they are not so strongly established, as to be capable of resisting the Power of the Almighty. † *He looks on the Earth, and it trembles ; he touches the Hills, and they smoke.* And how dreadful doth this Convulsion of Nature appear to us ! How strong the Consternation into which it throws us ! Can we help being astonished, when we find the Ground we tread on, and from which we scarce suspect any fatal Evil, all in Agitation, our Dwellings tottering around us, and threatening in an Instant to bury us in their Ruins ; for who can tell where the Shock will end, or if the first spares us, whether a second, or a third, may not instantly follow it, and overwhelm us with a sudden Destruction ! A dreadful Vault may be just under our Habitations, and Nature by long and gradual Preparations may now have ripened all her Materials to force it open, and receive us into the dark and deep Abyss. This is the Imagination, that these Tremors of the Earth naturally suggest. Even the lesser Strokes that we have lately felt, produced, I believe, in the generality of Men, that were sensible of them, an immediate Consternation, and hath had such an Effect on many, as to drive them from their Dwellings, to seek their Safety in Places more remote from this City. But how much stronger must the Consternation be, where repeated Shocks succeed each other, and every succeeding one grows more violent than the other ; when Men see their Houses reeling, opening, and tumbling in a Moment, Mountains rending and falling into Ruins, the Earth itself either widely gaping before them, or

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\* Psa. civ. 5. . . † Ibid. 32.

so violently agitated as to supplant their Feet, and prevent their Flight from the impending Horrors that surrounded them. This might have been our Case, as it hath been of others, according to the most authentick Accounts both of ancient and modern History.

2. No wonder therefore, that they are represented in Scripture, as Events that proclaim the Power and Majesty of God. \* *Clouds and Darkness are round about him. His Lightnings enlightened the World. The Earth saw and trembled. The Hills melted like Wax at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the Lord of the whole Earth: The Heavens declare his Righteousness, and all the People see his Glory.* And in that truly elegant Ode, composed by the inspired Writer, on the Deliverance of *Israel* from the *Egyptian Bondage*. *When Israel went out of Egypt—the Sea saw it and fled, Jordan was driven back, the Mountains skipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs. What ailed thee, O Sea, that thou fledest? Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye Mountains, that ye skipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs?* In which Words, he particularly resembles the repeated Convulsions and Throws, the Vibrations and Heavings of the Earth, quick succeeding one another, by which, † probably, as our Cause, the Waves of the *Red-Sea*, and the Waters of *Jordan* were divided, that his favourite People might safely pass through them, to the Frisking of Rams, and the Boundings and Skippings of Lambs; and then adds: *Tremble thou Earth at the Presence of the Lord, and at the Presence of the God of Jacob.* And in Truth, as all natural Effects are the Constitution of the eternal Creator, nothing gives us a more affecting Idea of his Glory and Grandeur, nothing tends to strike

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us with more lively Awes of his sovereign Power and Authority, than the murmuring hollow Sound of the convulsed Earth, its sudden Tremors, shuddering, as it were, for fear of the insupportable Majesty of God, and appearing conscious of the Presence of its great Former and Lord, and shaking from its Centre, in a kind of Acknowledgment of the profound Homage and Adoration it owes to him; and when he commands it, lifting up the Mountains and Hills from their old Foundations, and spreading universal Confusion, Horror, and dreadful Desolation.

3. Who can doubt, that consider these Things, to pronounce them evident awakening Marks of the divine Displeasure, and whether it be the Duty of all to regard them as Indications of his Anger, for the abounding and aggravated Sins of Men? Thus they are represented by the sacred Writings. Thus Job in my Text: \* *He overturneth the Mountains in his Anger, and shakes the Earth out of her Place.* And again: *The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are astonished at his Re-proof.* And the Prophet Jeremiab: † *At his Wrath the Earth shall tremble, and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation.* And surely these Things look like the Rebukes and Visitations of God for Sin. ‡ *Thou shall be visited of the Lord of Host with Thunder, and Earthquakes, and great Noise; with Storm and Tempest, and the Flame of devouring Fire,* saith Isaab to Jerusalem. And Nabum in his Vision concerning Niniveb, tells that proud and oppressive City: || *The Lord will not at all acquit the Wicked. His Way is in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the Dust of his Feet. The Mountains quake at him, the Hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his*

\* Job. xxvi. 11. † Jer. x. 10. ‡ Isa. xxix. 6. || Nah.  
i. 1—6.

*bis Presence, yea the World, and all that are therein.* Who can stand before his Indignation, who can abide in the Fierceness of his Anger? His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him. Every Thing is in Terror when God is angry. Even the insensible Creation discovers its Dread of his Displeasure. The firmest Parts of Nature are of no longer Stability when his Indignation is poured out, and the Rocks themselves move out of their Places, and the everlasting Mountains are torn in funder, when he comes to take Vengeance on hardened and incorrigible Sinners. What can, in the Nature of Things, be a surer Proof of God's being offended with the Crimes of Men, than a Shake that threatens the intire Subversion of a City in a Moment, that appals every one who feels it, and makes them in the Astonishment of their Souls to cry out: *Lord save us, or we perish!* Even those Successions that are most favourable, and attended with no immediate and sudden Desolations, no Man looks on as desirable Things, considers them as Indications of a propitious Deity, or even reflects on them with Pleasure, on any other account, but his having escaped the instantaneous Ruin, with which they threatened him. And if they are considered as effected, meditately, or immediately, by the Hand of God, it is impossible to regard them in any other light, than as the Shakings of his Rod, the friendly Warnings of his Providence, and serious Calls to Repentance, and Reformation, to prevent worse Things from befalling them. But how much more dreadful Proofs of the Indignation of the Almighty God, are those Agitations of the Earth, that are repeated and violent, and spread universal Devastation amongst the Dwellings and Inhabitants of the Earth? When they level wealthy and stately Cities from their Foundations,

dations, and swallow up thousands of the miserable Inhabitants, without a Moment's Leisure to escape the Danger, or allowing them time for one serious Reflection, or breathing out a single Prayer to God for Mercy ? And this leads me to a further Observation, *viz.*

4. That the Effects of these Succussions of the Earth are sometimes so terrible, as that they can be considered in no other possible View, than as immediate Instances of the divine Vengeance, for the Impieties and Iniquities of Mankind. And here we have Instances enough from sacred and profane History. This, I doubt not, was one Cause of the Universal Deluge, that swept away the Antediluvian World, when *the Fountains of the great Deep were broken up*, as well as *the Windows of Heaven opened*; the Earth rending by violent Shocks, and spouting forth, in mighty Torrents, all the hidden Treasures of the Abyss, to overwhelm the guilty Universe with its Waves. The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was by a Storm of Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, whereby \* *they were set forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.* But the turning that once fertile Plain, on which those Cities stood, into a Sea, or Lake of briny Water, can, I apprehend, be accounted for no other way, but the Concussion and Sinking of the Ground, and the Bursting forth of a Deluge of Water, filling up that *horrid Chasm* into which these unnatural Monsters descended, as the signal Punishment of their horrid Provocations; the Waters being impregnated by the sulphureous Storm which fell from Heaven, or those bituminous Principles, which the Cavern, from whence they arose, naturally abounded with. A Monument of God's Vengeance this, which remains to this Day, to verify this Part

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\* Jude, Ver. 7.

of the sacred History, and to shew the divine Abhorrence of those execrable Crimes, for which that dreadful Punishment was inflicted! In the Time of *Moses*, \* *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, with all their Associates in the Rebellion, were made to understand that they provoked the Lord, by the Earth's opening her Mouth, and swallowing them up with all that appertained to them, their Tents, and their Goods, so that they went down alive into the Pit, the Earth closed on them, and they perished from amongst the Congregation. In the Days of *Uzziah*, King of *Judah*, an Earthquake happened in † *Judea*, which was so violent, as made the Inhabitants flee from their Cities. And tho' the Effects of it are not particularly described, yet it must have been a very dreadful one, if what ‡ *Josephus* relates concerning it be true, that one of the Hills, that lie before *Jerusalem*, was split in funder, and the western Part of it moved, and driven forwards towards the East, to the Distance of about four Furlongs, so as wholly to overwhelm the publick Roads, and the Royal Gardens.

Let me add, that this seems to me to be the Punishment that is reserved in Store for the persecuting, bloody, idolatrous || *Rome*. For when the fixed Period of her Destruction shall come, *Their shall be Voices, Thunders, and Lightnings, and a great Earthquake, such as never was before, since Men were on the Face of the Earth; so mighty an Earthquake, and so great. And the great City shall be divided into three Parts, i. e. through the Fury of the Concussion rent in Pieces, or punished by a threefold Vengeance from God §; probably by a preceding Pestilence, Famine, and Storm of Hail and Fire from Heaven, and at length wholly devoured by the Earthquake. And great*

\* Num. xvi. 32, 33. † Zech. xiv. 5. Amos i. 1. ‡ Antiq. l. 9. c. 10. §. 10. || Rev. xvi. 18, 19. § ib. xviii. 8. xvi. 21.

great Babylon shall come in Remembrance before God, to give unto her the Cup of the Wine of the Fierceness of his Wrath. And this is farther exemplified by other Descriptions of her Punishment, as that it should be sudden and unavoidable.

\* Her Plagues shall come in one Day, Death, Mourning, and Famine. In one Hour her Judgment shall come, and she shall be utterly burnt with Fire, and with such a Fire, as that the Kings of the Earth shall see the Smoak of her Burning, standing afar off for Fear of her Torment, and in their Astonishment, crying out: *What City is like to this great City, formerly in Wealth and Glory, now in Desolation and Ruin!* In one Hour she is made desolate, and cast down with Violence, so as that it shall be found no more at all! Expressions these, that plainly point out an instantaneous, irresistible Destruction, by her sinking at once into that horrible Gulph, which by an Earthquake shall open for her Reception, out of which, probably shall issue a fiery Stream, forming a *Vulcano*, that shall be the awful Monument of God's Vengeance, and of her eternal and irreversible Destruction. In Confirmation of this, it may be added, that the Soil on which *Rome* stands, is by Nature and Providence fitted to bring on it such a *Catastrophe*; the subterraneous Caverns, and *Strata* abounding with Sulphur and Bitumen, as appears by its Neighbourhood to *Campania*, and *Mount Vesuvius*, the Mines of Allum and Sulphur, and warm Baths that abound in it, the † several Earthquakes that have happened there, and the breaking out of subterraneous Fires, even in *Rome* itself; one of which, under the Reign of *Titus* ‡, and whilst he was absent from the City, to visit the Ruins occasion-

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\* Rev. xviii. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 21. † Cicer. *de Divin.*  
l. i. c. 35. Dion. Hal. A. R. l. 10. p. 600. Tacit. *An.* l. 12.  
§. 43. ‡ Suet. *Tit.* c. 8. §. 9. Apud Dion. C. p. 756.

ed by the Eruptions of *Mount Vesuvius*, lasted three Days and three Nights, and consumed, besides numerous other Buildings, several of the principal \* Temples, Edifices, and Palaces. And afterwards in the Reign of *Commodus* the Temple of Peace was suddenly consumed by Fire; either by Lightning in the Night, or which is more probable, by the Eruption of Fire from an Earthquake, which *Herodian* observes was felt the same Night the Temple was burnt down, with all the immense Treasures that were reposed there, and many others of the most elegant and beautiful Parts of the City.

Let me conclude this Head with observing farther, that these Eruptions, by Earthquakes, may contribute their Share to the final Desolation of the World itself, according to the Predictions of the sacred Writers, and the Intimations of profane Historians. Some Account for this great Event, by the too near Approach of a Comet to this Globe. Others, by the Earth's continual Approximation to the Sun, whereby at last *the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat; the Earth also and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up.* Probably, many Causes may conspire to the Accomplishment of these Prophecies; and if, when this Earth is fired from without by a Comet, or the Sun's Heat, all the inflammable Vapours, Minerals, and combustible Materials within its own Bowels, should, in numerous Places, burst thro' the Surface in Flames, and rend, and tear, convulse, and overturn it, these united Causes will be abundantly sufficient to produce this entire and universal Conflagration, and thus to purge away the Crimes of Men, and introduce that *new Heaven, and*

\* *Herodian*, I. 1. c. 14. §. 3.

*and new Earth, wherein shall dwell perpetual Righteousness.*

It would be easy to produce numerous Instances from profane History, ancient and modern, of the dreadful Effects of these convulsive Motions of the Earth, in order to demonstrate, that they are the evident Tokens of God's Displeasure, and the signal Messengers of his Vengeance for the Sins of Men. \* *Strabo, Tacitus, Pliny*, and other Historians, take Notice of a very terrible Earthquake at Midnight in the Reign of *Tiberius*, that utterly subverted twelve of the principal and most famous Cities of *Asia*, amongst which were *Ephesus, Sardis, and Philadelphia*, three of which St. John mentions in his *Revelations*, the Destruction of which was the more terrible, as it was instantaneous, and without any previous Warning; so sudden, as that the Inhabitants had no time to escape out of their Houses, but were swallowed up quick by the Opening of the Ground. High Mountains sunk down all at once, Plains rose into high Mountains, and Flames burst out of the midst of the Ruins. During the Empire of *Titus*, and not long after the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by him, happened the first great Eruption of Mount *Vesuvius* in *Campania*, the most fertile Country of *Italy*, described by † *Pliny* in his two Letters to *Tacitus* the Historian. *Pliny* was witness to that dreadful Event, his Uncle perished in it, and he himself with the greatest Difficulty escaped Destruction. During the Eruption, the Earthquake was almost perpetual, and by the extreme Violence

\* Eodem anno duodecim celebres Asiae urbes conlapsæ nocturno motu terræ, quo improvisor graviorque pestis fuit. Neque solitum in tali casu effugium subveniebat in aperta prærumpendi, quia diductis terris hauriebantur. Sedisse immenses montes, visa in arduo quæ plana fuerint, effulsiſſe inter ruinam ignis memorant. Tacit. *Annal. l. 2. c. 47.*

† Epist. l. 6. Ep. 16. 20.

lence of it ruined many Cities, and intirely swallowed up two, \* *Herculanum* and *Pompeii*, whilst the People in the latter were assembled in the *Theatre*, and intent upon the publick *Shews and Plays*; and the Terror occasioned by it was so great, as that many thought the World was going to be reduced to a Chaos, or to be destroyed by Fire. Whilst *Trajan* the Emperor was at † *Antioch*, an Earthquake shook that City into Ruins, and an infinite Multitude perished in it, the Emperor himself hardly escaping. Several Mountains were intirely levelled, large Quantities of Water rose up where they had never been before, and disappeared where they had formerly been; in so much, that the Historian doth not scruple to attribute this Calamity to God. To come nearer our own Times, in *Sicily*, *January 1693*, after a very serene, warm Season, unusual there in that Part of the Year, a dreadful Earthquake spread Devastation throughout almost the whole Island, near sixty thousand of the Inhabitants perished by it, many of the principal Cities were intirely laid waste, and scarce a Town or Village in the Island, but what shared more or less in the Effects of it. At *Jamaica*, *Anno Dom. 1692*, the Houses throughout the Island were thrown down by a like Accident, Nine-tenths of *Port-Royal* were demolished, or swallowed up in *two Minutes time*, two thousand of the People were lost, and the City ingulphed by a sudden Deluge of Water. But a few Years ago, in the Memory of all of us, *Lima* in *Peru* was wholly shaken to Pieces, the Port of *Callao* totally sunk and disappeared, and many thousands of People perished in the like Calamity. It is impossible to read the Accounts of these dreadful Accidents without shuddering, and acknowledging,

\* *Dion. Cas. I. 66. p. 756.* † *Dion. Cas. I. 68. p. 781, 782.*

knowledging: *The Lord is known by the Judgments which he executes. Holy and reverend is his Name!*  
But farther,

5. I must remind you, that these Concussions of the Earth are represented in the sacred Writings, as Fore-runners of other Judgments to succeed them, or the Beginnings of God's Vengeance on a sinful and impenitent People; so that the slightest Shocks are not to be disregarded, but should be considered with an holy Fear, as carrying in them the Threatnings of God of worse Evils to befall Men, if they will not take the friendly Warnings that are given them. Thus the Prophet *Jeremiah* represents the Tremblings of the Earth, as introductory to heavier Judgments from the divine Displeasure. \* *I beheld the Earth, and lo it was without Form and Void, and the Heavens, and they had no Light. I beheld the Mountains, and lo they trembled, and all the Hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo there was no Man, and all the Birds of Heaven were fled. I beheld, and lo the fruitful Place was a Wilderness, and all the Cities thereof were broken down at the Presence of the Lord, and by his fierce Anger. For thus saith the Lord, the whole Land shall be desolate.* What Words can paint out the Calamities of a People in a stronger and more affecting manner than these, when the Heavens withheld their Light, and threw an universal Blank over the Face of Nature, when the Fowls of the Air forsook the devoted Land, when the Mountains trembled, and the Hills, as it were, fled from their Places, when God appeared to take Vengeance on his degenerate People. In like manner, *Habakkuk* † represents the Mountains as shaking for Fear, and retiring before God, when they saw him march in solemn Pomp to execute Judgment on the Enemies of his

\* Jer. iv. 23—27. † Hab. iii. 5, 6—10.

his People. *Before him went the Pestilence, and burning Diseases went forth at his Feet. The everlasting Mountains were scattered, and the perpetual Hills did bow. The Mountains saw thee, and they trembled.* And though the Passages I have mentioned, and others that I might have added, are possibly intended, after the *Eastern* manner, principally to represent, by these pompous lofty Expressions, the Certainty and Greatness of God's Vengeance, and are not to be rigidly understood always according to the Letter, yet I see no Reason always to exclude the literal Meaning. This, however, they certainly point out to us, that we have great Reason to fear, when these Concussions really happen, least they should be but the Beginnings of Evil, and Preludes of some heavier Vengeance in Store for us. For if the figurative and poetick Trembling of the Earth is intended by God to represent approaching Judgments, what must be the Intention of his Providence, when he permits it actually to tremble under us? Is it not to tell us, that our Prosperity is insecure, that his Almighty Protection is withdrawing from us, that the Foundation on which our National Welfare stands is dissolving and sinking under us, and that if we will not take Warning by these plain Indications of his Displeasure, he will farther turn his Hand upon us, bring us to ourselves, if possible, by more dreadful Animadversions on our Follies and Vices, or else proceed to the Severity of a total Excision.

Our blessed Saviour expressly declared to his Apostles, that previous to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, amongst other Signs of its final Desolation, there should be *Earthquakes in diverse Places*. This Prediction was literally fulfilled. That in *Asia* under *Tiberius*, I have already taken Notice of.

of. Under \* *Claudius* frequent Convulsions of the Earth were felt at *Rome*, by which many Houses were shaken into Ruins. Under † *Nero* a whole Town in *Campania*, was thrown down by this terrible Accident. A like happened in the Reign of *Galba* ‡, and what I would particularly take Notice of, as I have not seen it observed by any Writers in Verification of this Prediction, is, that when *Vespasian* was in *Judea*, employed in reducing the revolted Cities, Fortresses, and Castles into Obedience, just before his actually investing *Jerusalem* itself, and the very Night the || *Idumeans* were admitted into that City, there arose a most violent Storm of Wind and Rain, attended with perpetual Lightnings, dreadful Thunders, and prodigious Roarings of an Earthquake; so that, as *Josephus* observes, the very Frame of the World seemed to be disturbed for the Destruction of the Jews, and that it portended no small Calamity to them. And this is the more remarkable, because this Admission of the *Idumeans* into *Jerusalem* determined the Fate of it. For, as the same Author observes §, the Murther of *Ananus* the High Priest by the *Idumeans*, immediately upon their Entrance, was the Beginning of the Destruction of the City, and from that Day of his Death, the Walls might be said to be subverted, and the Jewish Republick to be intirely dissolved; because, being a Man of Moderation and Prudence, he would certainly have persuaded the Nation to have come to a Composition with the *Romans*. But, says *Josephus*, God having devoted that polluted City to Destruction, and determined to purge the sacred Place with Fire, he cut of those who were its best Defences, and had the highest Affection for the People's

\* Tacit. *Annal.* l. 2. c. 47. † Idem. *ibid.* l. 15. c. 22.  
‡ Suet. *Galb.* c. 18. || Joseph. *de Bel. Jud.* l. 4. c. 4. § 5.  
§ *Ibid.* c. 5. § 2.

Prosperity. I could farther easily turn you to other Instances, when these Concussions of the Earth, have been followed with Wars, by malignant pestilential Distempers, and great Mortality amongst Men. But though I would gladly awaken in you the most serious Reflections, on Account of these two Shocks, that have lately been felt in and about these great Cities; yet I would not distress you, by raising in your Minds painful Imaginations of what never may, and I hope in God will not happen. I shall, however, conclude this Head with an Observation of *Pliny* on this Subject, which I will not pretend intirely to vindicate, or to censure, and ridicule as absolutely superstitious: *viz.* That \* *this Evil is seldom single, or it is not only by the Shakes itself that we are endangered. For there never was one of these Tremors at Rome, but it was an equal or greater Prognostick of some future Event that was approaching.*

Once more,

6. I would observe, that these Concussions of the Earth are represented in Scripture, as sometimes introductory of some great and remarkable Alteration in the State of the World *for the better*, of some new Dispensation of Things, by the good Providence and Favour of God, some signal Deliverance and Benefit to his People in the Destruction of their Enemies, the Establishment of their Peace and Prosperity, and their Recovery to a better State of Piety and Virtue, by purging out the Wicked from amongst them, and such as are the great Corrupters of Religion and Morality amongst Mankind; when these awful Events

have

\* *Nec vero simplex malum, aut in ipso tantum motu periculum eit; sed par, aut majus ostentum. Nunquam urbs Roma tremuit, ut non futuri eventus alicujus id prænuncium esset. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 84. Terræ saepe fremitus, saepe muritus, saepe motus multa nostræ Reipublicæ, multa cæteris ciuitatibus, gravia et vera prædixerint. Cicer. de Divin. l. 1. c. 18.*

have a double Aspect ; of Judgment and Vengeance to the incorrigibly Bad, and of great Advantage and Consolation to the truly Good. The inspired Author to the *Hebrews* \* observes, that at the giving of the Law, by which the *Israelites* were separated from the Idolatries and Impieties of the World, *God's Voice shook the Earth*. But now he hath promised saying : Yet once more I shake not the Earth only, but the Heavens also. And this Expression, yet once more, signifies the removing of these Things that are shaken, as of Things that are made, that those Things which cannot be shaken may remain. When God gave his Statutes from Mount † *Sinai*, Moses tells us, that there were *Thunders, and Lightnings, and a thick Cloud on the Mount, and the Voice of the Trump exceeding loud, and the Smoke ascended as the Smoke of a Furnace, and the whole Mount quaked greatly.* These were the Effects of the divine Presence, when God came in the Pomp and Majesty of a Lawgiver, to deliver his Commandments to *Israel*, whom he had ‡ chosen for his Inheritance, the People whom he loved, when they sat down at his Feet, and received of his Words. By *Haggai* the Prophet he promised, that he would || *shake the Heavens and the Earth, the Sea and the dry Land, and all Nations*, i. e. that there should be great Concussions in the Earth, and remarkable Comotions amongst the Nations of the World, previous to the coming of the *Desire of all Nations*, and his filling his House with Glory ; both which were abundantly verified, there being in *Judea* § such a Concussion of the Earth, as never was known before, by which vast Numbers of Cattle were destroyed throughout the whole Country, and ten thousand Persons buried in the Ruins of their

\* Heb. xii. 26, 27. † Exod. xix. 16, 18. ‡ Deut. xxxiii. 3.  
|| Hag. ii. 6, 7. § Joseph. Antig. l. 15. c. 5. §. 2.

Houses, and in other Places of the Empire ; many Cities being subverted by Earthquakes in the Reign of *Augustus* \*, and the whole *Roman Empire* shaken by Land and Sea, by the Civil War between him and *Mark Anthony*. The sacred Historian † observes, that at our Lord's Death, not only *the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain, from the Top to the Bottom, but the Earth quaked, and the Rocks were rent*; to shew the Dissolution of the *Jewish Covenant and Constitution*, and that God was about to shake that unbelieving persecuting Nation out of their Temple, City, and Country. And when our Lord arose from the Dead, his Conquest over the Grave, and the Introduction of the Covenant of Life and Immortality was declared by such a Shaking of the Earth, as made *the Keepers* ‡ of his Monument quit their Charge, *tremble for fear, and become as dead Men*. When *Rome* || shall be swept off the World, and swallowed up by an Earthquake, in that fiery Gulph which is preparing for her, *Heaven and Earth, the Apostles, and Prophets, and the whole Church of God shall sing, Hallelujah, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord God for the Judgment executed on her*, which shall be followed by *the Marriage of the Lamb*, and the most glorious, happy, and prosperous State of the *Christian Church*. It would indeed be vain, and presumptuous for any to affirm, that the Shakes we have lately felt, are previous to a better State of Things, to be shortly introduced by the Providence of God. Such a State is, however, I apprehend, expressly promised, when the *Jews* shall be brought as a Nation to the Belief and Profession of *Christianity*, and the Publication of the *Gospel* amongst the *Gentiles* shall be more universal,

and

\* *Suet. Aug. c. 47. §. 3.* † *Mat. xxvii. 51.* ‡ *Mat. xxviii. 2, 4.* || *Rev. xviii. 20. xxix. 1.*

and when the good Effects of *Christian* Principles shall more gloriously appear in the Lives and Tempers of those who publickly acknowledge and embrace them. And as this Season doth not seem to me to be very far distant, we may expect the Preparations for it will become more and more observable. And prudent *Christians* will not fail to remark them, and without pretending positively to determine the Day, or the Year, or to affirm that this, or the other Event is a certain Prognostication of it, will lay Things and Circumstances together, as they fall out in the Course of Providence, to support their own Faith and Hope in the Prophecies and Promises of divine Revelation ; contentedly leaving *the Times and Seasons* in the Hand of that God, *whose Counsel shall stand, and who will do all his Pleasure.* I shall only add,

7. Lastly, that another Intention of these Shakings of the Earth is to shew the inconstant, unsettled, dissoluble, perishing Nature of this World, and all Things in it ; that it neither was from Eternity, nor shall endure to it. What is strictly eternal, is strictly incapable of Motion, and any possible Alteration in any single Instance whatsoever, but must remain where it was, and what it was, without any the least Variation, or *Shadow of turning.* But how numerous and indisputable are the Appearances, that demonstrate that Immutability doth not belong to our Globe, which is every Moment shifting, and varying its Situation and Place, liable to innumerable Changes on its Surface, the Dissolution of its Mountains, and the Elevation of its Plains, the Lands being deluged with Water, and the Lakes and Rivers being turned into dry Ground, the Eruption of *Vulcano's*, and the Desolation of whole Countries by sudden and irresistible Fires ; in a Word, to be reconverted into that *Chaos*, out of which the Power, Wisdom,

Wisdom, and Goodness of the Almighty originally formed it ; that frequently trembles by the intestine Discords, Tumults, and Agitations of its own Bowels, and that contains within itself the certain Causes of that final Dissolution, to which Prophecy and Revelation hath long since doomed it. What then, tho' the *Foundations* of it are so firmly fastened, and the *Corner-Stones* of it so strongly united, as that no created Power can shake them, yet we find by our own Experience, that there is a Power that can make the mighty Fabrick to falter, and by spreading an universal Tremor throughout this well compacted Frame, cause even the stoutest Hearts to dissolve for Fear. There is a Power that can break *its Bars*, root up the Foundations of the proudest Hills from their Bottoms, rend in Pieces the solid Rocks, carry the largest Mountains from their Seats, level them with the humble Valley, or open them into Furnaces of tempestuous and unextinguishable Fires. Our stateliest Cities, our splendid Temples, our rising Spires, our strongest Fortresses, our costly Palaces, our Gardens of Pleasure, all our Pride and Security hath its Foundation in the Dust ; and what hath been the Labour of innumerable Hands, the Work of many Years, and the Consumption of the richest Treasures, is not Proof against a Moment's Shock, but in an Instant totters, reels, and sinks into universal and eternal Destruction. Dreadful Instances of this Truth hath the Providence of God afforded us, to shew us that the End of all Things shall come on, and that the Hour will approach, that shall mar all the Beauty of the World, turn it into an Heap of Ruins, perhaps intirely dissolve the Frame of it, or possibly see it, *Phenix like*, arise more gloriously out of its Desolation, and converted into a beautiful and blissful Mansion, for the Habitation of some happy Beings, who shall never

never pollute it with our Crimes, nor render its Purification necessary by the Waters of another Deluge, or the devouring Flames of a second Conflagration. So just is that Observation, of the inspired Writer, even in the literal Sense, \* that *God's shaking the Earth, signifies the Removal of those Things that are shaken*, when before the Presence of the universal Judge, seated on the Throne of his Glory, *the present Earth and Heaven shall flee away, and there shall be found no more Place for them for ever!*

1. Are then these Concussions of the World the evident Marks of the divine Displeasure, and sometimes Forerunners of the severest Judgments of God, upon a sinful Nation and People, and doth it not become us in these Kingdoms to consider our own Circumstances, and seriously to attend to these awakening Calls of divine Providence. Would to God the publick State of Religion and Virtue was such in the midst of us, as that we had no Reason to stand in awe, and tremble upon Account of them. 'Tis but an ungrateful Task publickly to reproach Nations for their Vices, as it is publishing the Shame of the People amongst whom we dwell; nor is it a pleasing Employment to be putting them continually in mind of the divine Vengeance they provoke by their Impieties and Crimes that abound in the midst of them. For who, that loves his Country, can take Pleasure in the prospect of it's Distress, or not mourn over it, when he sees the plainest Indications of the Judgments of God approaching it? And yet who can be silent on such Occasions? What benevolent Mind can see *the Glory departing*, the Foundations of the publick Happiness dissolving by the open Practice, and daily Encrease of the worst of Enormities, the Providence of God giving us repeated Warnings of our Danger, and all things conspiring to

\* Heb. xii. 27. Rev. xx. 11.

to bring on us the severest Calamities ; without feeling the greatest Anxiety, and attempting to his utmost to give some Check to the Causes, that threaten the Destruction of the Nation's Welfare.

Upon the most candid and impartial View of things, is there not too much Reason to take up the Prophet's Complaint : \* *Ab sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquities, a Seed of evil Doers, Children that are Corrupters, that have forsaken the Lord, that have provoked the Holy One to Anger ! The whole Head is sick, the whole Heart is faint ; from the Sole of the Foot, even unto the Head, there is no Soundness in it.* All Ranks and Degrees of Men, from the highest to the lowest, amongst all their religious and political Differences, seem to be fatally united in this ; the increasing the Sins and Guilt of the Nation, *the filling up the Measure of our Iniquities*, and the ripening us for some signal Rebukes of the divine Displeasure. Amongst many, what an intire Waste is there of all good Principles, who pay as little regard to those of natural Religion, as they do to those of Revelation. Is it not become fashionable, and even a mark of Politeness, and good Sense, to declare for Infidelity, and openly to renounce all Regard to the great *Author and Finisher of our Christian Faith?*

What Respect is paid by the Generality of the rich and great to the Institutions of publick Worship, who never frequent the Church of God, think it beneath them to pay their Adorations to him that made them, and scorn all Instructions in Wisdom, and Virtue : Yea, who to shew they renounce all Relation to, and Dependence on the great Preserver and Governor of the World, have banished him even from their Tables, and deride as Superstition, the very asking his Blessing, or the returning him Thanks, when they have been Feasting liberally on the Effects of his Bounty ! What is

the

\* Isai. i. 4, 5, 6.

the Day of sacred Rest become, but a Day of Sloth, Indolence, and Folly, when the Houses of too many of them are turned into Assembly-Rooms, filled with *Routs*, and *Riots*, and scandalously converted into Places of Diversion for *public Gaming*, in open Violation of the Laws of God and Man? I wish even our Churches themselves were intirely free from a Prophanation of a worse kind, the Prophanation of one of the most solemn Institutions of the *Christian Worship*; not only as administered on a *civil Account*, but indiscriminately to Men of the vilest and most profligate Characters, to Men of all Ranks, Parties, Principles, or no Principles, who demand it as their *Qualification*; a Practice inconsistent with every Appearance of *Discipline* in the Church; that tends to bring the very Institution itself into Contempt, by thus rendering it *common* and unholy, and the Clergy under Reproach who thus administer it; that must, in the Nature of the Thing, occasion numberless Impieties, and thereby render the best Attempts for a national Reformation greatly unsuccessful; that is a national Provocation of the most heinous Nature, and one of the principal Sources of that Infidelity, and Profaneness, which good Men of all Parties justly complain of, as the growing Evil of our Times. For Men will but too naturally think, that the Clergy themselves have no very high Opinion of the Sacredness, Dignity, and Importance of an Institution, which they see them prostitute to meerly secular Purposes, and pervert from its original Intention into a mere *Instrument of State Policy*, and *the Badge of a Party*; and after a grave Warning of *the great Peril of unworthy receiving*, and a solemn Admonition to *Blasphemers of God, Hinderers and Slanderers of his Word, Adulterers, such as are in Malice, or Envy, or any other grievous Crime, not to come near the holy Table without*

*Repentance*, yet receiving without Fear or Scruple Men chargeable with all these Crimes, without any Profession, or the least Appearance of Repentance : A Practice that hath, I believe, no Precedent or Example to justify it, amongst any of the Churches of the Reformation, and which I wish and pray for the Removal of, not as a *Dissenter* from the Established Church, for the Dissenting Interest can gain nothing by it, but for the Honour of the Established Church itself, to whom it is a real Reproach, and but the Shadow of a Security. As for myself, I publickly declare, that for the Sake of our common *Christianity*, the Respect I bear to all the worthy Part of the national Clergy, for maintaining the Dignity of the *Christian Worship*, and to remove what I cannot but think one main Occasion of the visible Effects of God's Displeasure to these Nations ; I had rather be brought under *some fresh Difficulties* of a civil Nature, as the less Evil of the two, than see a Practice continued so dishonourable to Christianity, that strikes at the Foundation of all serious Piety, tends to erase out of the Minds of Men all Reverence for Things of a sacred Nature, and to bring upon these Kingdoms those Judgments, which no Man can foresee the End, or declare the Consequences of ; tho', methinks, Experience should at length teach us, that that Establishment is of all others the most secure, that is supported by Moderation, Gentleness, and the Spirit of *Christian Charity* and Forbearance.

Another Evil, and no small one, that prevails amongst us is, the *numberless Oaths* that are imposed upon all Ranks and Orders of Men ; Oaths, that in numerous Instances, it is universally and openly acknowledged, cannot be *literally*, i. e. truly and faithfully kept ; Oaths exacted in the most trivial Causes, and on the slightest Occasions, and too often administered with an intire Want of all

Appearance of Reverence and Solemity ; whereby frequent *Perjuries* must necessarily be occasioned, and we are become too like the ancient *Jews*, who \* *swore by the Name of the Lord, and made mention of God, but not in Truth, nor in Righteousness* ; and have too much Reason to fear, least the † *Curse should go forth over the Face of our whole Land, and God should cause it to enter into our Houses, and to remain in the midst of them, and consume them with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof*. Is it any Wonder that, when Oaths are made thus frequent by Law, and given in such a manner, as hath not the least Tendency to strike with Fear the Persons who take them, but on the contrary, to cause them to look on them as mere empty Forms, and insignificant Ceremonies, profane Cursing and Swearing in ordinary Conversation should so abound, as to become a common Nusance in our Streets ; as tho' all the Knowledge that Men had of God, was only to blaspheme, and utter the most horrid Imprecations in his Name ! Or, as tho' they made use of the Name of God, only to shew, that they defied his Vengeance, and dared impiously to provoke his Damnation !

And when Men are lost to Principle, and all those Awes of God, that are the only sure Restraints upon their Passions, are thus worn of, what can be the Consequence, but the most extravagant Debaucheries amongst the Rich and Great, and Villanies of all kinds, the most execrable, amongst the lowest and meanest of the People ? *I will get me*, saith the Prophet ‡, *to the great Men, and will speak unto them, for they should know the way of the Lord, and the Judgment of their God. But these have altogether broken the Yoke, and burst the Bonds. When he had fed them to the full, they then committed Adultery, and assembled themselves*

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\* Isa. xlviii. 1. † Zech. v. 3, 4. ‡ Jer. v. 5, 7.

*by Troops in the Harlots Houses.* It would be an Offence against Decency should I mention the Lewdnesses that are practised without Blushing, the too infamous Subjects of modern Conversation, and the Arts that are made use of to shame Modesty out of the World, and to keep the Passions ready enflamed, and prepared for the most criminal and profligate Debaucheries, and which it is impossible for Persons of the *most recluse Life* not to be sometimes offended with the Relation of.

Every one fees, and every wise Man fees with Concern, the Luxury and Love of Pleasure, that hath infected the Minds, and bewitched the Imaginations of all Degrees of Men; who, when they have no Principles, can have nothing but Instinct and Inclination to govern them, and will madly follow wheresoever that blindly leads them. Within my own Remembrance, how are the Houses of Diversion encreased, and how various and new the kinds of it that have been invented, wholly unknown to our Ancestors, and which the generous Severity of former Times would never have endured. Not content with these Receptacles of Gaiety and Mirth, at the distant Parts of the Town, we have introduced them *into the Heart* of the City. They confront our Exchange, bid Defiance to our Trade, and by becoming the Sources of Extravagance, and the powerful Allurements to the Neglect of Business, threaten the Prosperity, and even the Being of our Commerce. To support the Expences, that these numerous Diversions necessarily occasion, the large Draughts for Pleasure cramp Business, straiten Men in their Payment, and put them upon imprudent and illicit Measures to supply their Wants; Gaming, borrowing of Friends, Widows, and Fatherless, desperate Pushes to retrieve their Circumstances, unfair and wicked Measures of Trade, to the Injury of honest Men, and the Detriment of

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Government itself ; Methods that seldom fail to ruin those who practise them, and that too often involve the Credulous and Innocent in the same Destruction.

From hence arises that *universal Venality*, that is the Reproach and Curse of the present Generation. \* *Every one almost, from the least even to the greatest, is given to Coveteousness*, so that Men must be bought for every Service of their Country, and are as easily bought to betray and sacrifice it ; insomuch, that it is now openly avowed, that *Bribery* is become a necessary Evil, necessary to preserve the Religion and Liberties of these Kingdoms. O precarious Foundation on which these sacred Interests depend ! Who can help trembling, when he seriously considers, that their principal, or only Securities, are the Corruption and Perfidy of the worst of Men ?

In such a State of Things, when Princes and Nobles are the Leaders in Vice, and inferior Ranks and Orders grow infected by their Examples ; should Magistrates lose the Dignity of their Characters, should the Guardians of our Laws grow remiss in the Execution of them, should the Laws themselves become a *dead Letter*, without Life or Efficacy, and the Ministers of Religion too generally become *wholly secular*, and inattentive to their Cures ; can it be expected, that the Emissaries of Popery will not make their Advantage of our Follies and Vices, and assiduously labour to gain over Proselytes to their Superstitions and Idolatries ? This Evil is seen, it is publickly acknowledged, and loudly complained of. But to what Purpose ? In Proportion, as the Nation grows corrupt, it grows ripe for Popery. Religion is too much interwoven into the very Consciences of Men, wholly to extirpate it out of them ; and the Religion that most

\* Jer. viii. 10.

most favours their Vices, bad Men will be fond of, and easily fall into that, which will give them the greatest Ease and Security in the Commission of them. Every Convert of this kind becomes an Enemy to his Country, a Rebel in his Heart to his Prince, and wants only the Opportunity to give his Assistance to the Destruction of both. Put these Circumstances together, and I could have easily added more, and what is the Judgment that impartial Reason will pass on the Circumstances of these Kingdoms? Are we such a People, as can expect to be any longer favoured of Heaven? May we not too justly apply to ourselves the Language of God to his ancient People? \* *How shall I pardon thee for this? Shall I not visit for these Things? And shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?* In such a Situation, may we not justly be afraid from the Heavens over us, and from the Earth underneath us, and if these Convulsions of our World, as permitted by God, have any Intention, what other can it be but this, to let us know that we have awakened his Displeasure, and that he is shaking the Foundation of the national Security and Happiness?

II. Are they not therefore loud Calls to the Inhabitants of these Lands to immediate Repentance and Reformation, and should they not cause us to stand in Awe of God, that we Sin no more, least worse Evils should befall us? When he makes our Capital tremble, shakes our Palaces, and threatens the Subversion of our Houses, should we not consider our Ways that have not been good, turn unto the Lord, that he may have Mercy on us, and to our God, that he may abundantly pardon us? If when we are stricken we will not grieve, and when he threatens to consume us, we refuse to receive Correction,

\* Jer. v. 7, 9.

*tion, and make our Faces harder than a Rock, and will not wash ourselves from our Wickedness, how can we be saved? What remains, but Judgment without Mercy, and the total Excision of the Wicked from our Land? Oh why is this People sli-*

*back by a perpetual Backsliding? \* Will no Man re-*

*pent him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? The Stork in the Heaven knows her appointed Times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the Time of their coming, and shall we not know the Judgment of the Lord? The Ox knows its Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib, and shall we, more stupid than these, not know, nor consider the Things that belong to our Peace?*

Many have been, of late Years, the Intimations of the divine Displeasure to these Kingdoms. A War, may I not say, *too hastily* begun, in some Instances *ingloriously* carried on, almost in the whole *unsuccessfully* managed, and at last concluded *throu'* Necessity; an unnatural Rebellion in the midst of us, at first *successful*, and that came so near us, as to make us in Pain for all that was dear and valuable to us; the present uncertain Posture of our Affairs, and the Disturbances that seem to be fomenting and ripening in several Parts of *Eu-*

*rope*, in the Consequences of which, if they break out, we can scarcely fail of being affected and involved; the Spirit and *Rage of Party* amongst ourselves, and *the growing Disaffection* to the present Establishment and Government, I will not say fomented, but *scandalously appearing* in those Places, that should be the sacred Nurseries of Religion, Learning, and Loyalty; the Growth of Popery, especially amongst the lower Part of our People, almost *without Care* to prevent it, or check the busy Endeavours of those *Emissaries*, who are indefatigable to seduce them; the Mortality of our Cat-

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\* Jer. viii. 6, 7.

tle, raging for several Years, and baffling the Precautions of Government, and the Remedies of the most skilful to prevent the farther Ravages of it, and still prevailing in many Parts of this Island ; this double Shock *within a Month*, even of our *Capital* itself, and the Consternation caused by it among the Generality of its Inhabitants : Are not these Circumstances, that should awaken us to Consideration, and cause us in good earnest to enquire : *What will the End of these Things be ?*

If these Concussions amongst us have been favourable, and attended with no destructive Consequences, this only argues the great Patience and Forbearance of God, and his Willingness that we should not perish, but come to Repentance, and be saved. And if we will not be at length prevailed with to turn from our Iniquities by the Warnings, or lesser Judgments of Providence, God hath other *Arrows in his Quiver*, other Methods of national Punishment, to avenge his injured Rights as Sovereign of the World, and Plagues more dreadful, with which to visit an ungrateful and incorrigible People. God can make *the Pestilence to cleave to us, till he hath consumed us from off the Land, or smite us with the Consumption, the Fever, the Inflammation, and with an extream Burning* ; or with Drought, Blastings, and Mildew ; or make *the Heaven over us as Brass, and the Earth under us as Iron*, or corrupt our Seeds, and Fruits by immoderate Rains ; or give us up to intestine Divisions, or deliver us over into the Hands of *a fierce and cruel King*, who shall divide our Inheritance amongst Strangers, transfer our Honours amongst Aliens, and cause us to bow down to his false Gods and Idols, whom our Fathers have not known, or worshipped, and bring us under the Yoke of the severest Bondage.

It is not long since these Apprehensions were near us, when all good Men trembled for fear of them. And are we absolutely secure against this Destruction, when we have so many amongst ourselves that are willing and eager to introduce it, and the number of them is so confessedly increasing by the daily Spread of Popery ? Should God for our Sins permit us for a Season to fall under his Power, will not many of our Nobles and Gentry be the first, who shall feel the dreadful Effects of it, in the Forfeiture of their Honours, the Confiscation of their Estates, and their being brought to an ignominious Death ? Let them not imagine, that any Readiness to change their Religion, or fall into any new Measures that may then take place, will secure them from the Vengeance, that hath been long since determined against them. They are irreversibly doomed to Destruction, and nothing but their Honours, their Estates, and their Heads will satisfy for the Crimes, that will then be laid to their Charge. Why then will they not have Mercy on themselves, and these Nations ? Why will they not consult the Dignity of their own Characters, the Safety of themselves and their Families, and the common Interest of these Kingdoms, by avoiding those Practices that are contrary to all Appearances of Religion and Virtue, and strike at the Foundation of every Thing that is sacred and good ?

Why must that Day, that hath been consecrated from the Beginning of the World, to be a Memorial of the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God the universal Creator, be defecrated into a Day of Gaming, Sports, and disorderly Assemblies ? Is it beneath Men of Rank and Fortune, to adore and reverence the eternal God, or to appear in a Place that is appropriated to Devotion ? Is that venerable Name offensive to their Ears, or never to

be mentioned by them, except when it carries in it some Defiance of his Providence, Justice, and Displeasure? Can this be vindicated upon any Principles but those of downright Atheism? And is the Scheme of Atheism, what any Man of sober Reason can ever acquiesce in?

Can it, in a political View, be prudent, for those of Influence, Character, and Station, to appear to their Domesticks, Dependants, and Families, the Patrons of Impiety, of Contempt of Religion, and of all the Immoralities practised by the lowest and basest of Mankind? Must not the Effect of this be, perpetual Disorders in their own Houses, and the rendering themselves liable to be defrauded, and injured in some of their most essential and valuable Properties? Must it not encrease the Number of lawless and profligate Wretches, who defy all Law, and commit those Enormities that may be fatal to themselves, that are destructive of the publick Peace, and in the natural Course of Things tend to the Dissolution of Government itself? Is this consistent with Benevolence, Humanity, and the Love of their Country, thus to indulge their Passions, their Love of Pleasure, their Vices, at the Expence of all the valuable Interests of private and social Life? Never to deny themselves the most offensive criminal Gratifications, when God and Man demand it at their Hands? Is this all the Advantage that arises from Nobility, Titles, and splendid Fortunes, to be able to offend against all human and divine Laws with greater Impunity, and to spread wider than others, Corruption, Disorders, and Ruin, by their Examples, throughout all the inferior Ranks of Men? How much more honourable to themselves, how much more for the Peace and Security of these Nations would it be, if Persons of Condition, and distinguished by their external Advantages of Life, would be careful to distinguish

tinguish themselves by the venerable Virtues of a good Lite, put Vice out of Countenance by the Integrity of their own Conduct, and encourage amongst others, by their Authority and Influence, that Regard to Religion and Righteousness, by which alone they themselves, and the Nation can be exalted ?

III. Under all Events and Terrors of this Kind, and others of a like threatening Nature, how sure a Refuge have good Men in God, and how safely and cheerfully may they commit themselves, and all their valuable Interests to the Protection of his Power and Goodness ? *God is at all Times a Refuge for them, and at what Times they are afraid they may fix their Hearts by Trust in him.* Thus the inspired Prophet \* : *The Heavens and the Earth shall shake, but Jehovah is the Hope of his People, and the Strength of the Children of Israel.* And in like Manner the Psalmist † : *God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble.* Therefore will we not fear, tho' the Earth should be removed, and tho' the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea ; tho' the Waters thereof roar and are troubled, and the Mountains shake with the Swelling of them. When the Earth and Sea are blended, the Order of the World yields to Confusion, and the Wreck and Ruin of Nature is approaching ; a good Man, a sincere Christian may stand firm and unshaken amidst the Tumults and Convulsions he beholds, and *stay himself on God the Rock of Ages*, whose Covenant and Promise shall never fail, and who can sooner cease to be, than cease to be the Patron of Religion and Virtue, the Guardian and Friend of those *who fear him, and hope in his Mercy.*

This is the certain and necessary Tendency of true Religion in Principle, Habit and Practice, and as far as the Influence of it prevails, it will in

fact produce this desirable Effect. *We will not fear, tho' the Earth be removed,* is the Language of Piety, when the Principles of it have full Possession of the Heart, and Faith, and Hope, and Trust in God are in their full Life, and Vigour of Exercise. Tho' from the Dispositions of true Religion that influence him, he cannot but stand in awe of God, when he shakes the solid Globe, and seriously lay it to heart when he gives these and other Warnings of his Displeasure; yet this Awe is quite different from that mean and *abject Timidity* with which others are affected. 'Tis not that Consternation which disheartens and confounds them; that operates only in quickning their Speed, and hastening their Flight from the supposed Scene of Danger, and the Places they imagine may be more immediately affected by it. Vain Refuge, to think of fleeing where God cannot follow them, or that Change of Place or Habitation can be any Shelter to them, if he pursues them to their Destruction! Vain especially in Dangers of this Kind, because the Shock that hath been felt in one Place, may, on a Repetition \*, be felt in another, as hath been the Case in these Kingdoms, and produce more dreadful Effects even there, where we promised ourselves the most effectual Security. Or our own very Flight may prove fatal to us, or we may meet with Death from other Causes, if we should escape it by that, which we withdraw ourselves from thereach of.

The religious Fear of God produces quite other Effects, and causes good Men to renew their Repentance, to correct more intirely their Errors,

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\* *Desinamus audire istos, qui Campaniae renunciavere.—negantque se unquam ipsam regionem accessuros. Quis enim illis promittit melioribus fundamentis hoc aut illud solum stare? Omnia — Si nondum mota, tamen mobilia Hunc fortasse in quo securius consistis locum, haec nox, hic autem noctem dies recindet. Senec. His. Nat. l. 6. c. 1.*

to cultivate more carefully their Graces, to attend more diligently to the Duties of their Stations, to become more eminently useful, to be more earnest in Prayer with God for themselves, and the Nations they belong to, that the Threatnings of his Providence may have their kindly Effects, bring Sinners to serious Reflections, and promote that Reformation which is necessary to avert the divine Displeasure, and to prolong and establish the publick Security; and which, if it takes place in any considerable Degree, may disarm the Anger of God, and cause him to return with multiplied Blessings to the very City and People, he threatened with an intire Subversion and Desolation.

As to himself, the Man of Principle and Virtue knows, that *God is his Refuge and Fortress*, and that he hath wisely provided against all the most formidable Evils of his Nature, by having fled for *Refuge to lay hold of the Hope that is set before him*, embraced the Promises of God by Christ, and laid a good Foundation against the Time to come. And being thus fully prepared against all Events, he fixes his Heart by Trust in him; and when he can recollect himself, attend to his Circumstances, call up his Graces into Exercise, and awaken and actuate all the sacred Dispositions that are found in his Mind; tho' his Awes of God remain, his Terrors vanish, and he hath no desponding Fears to oppress him. He gives up nothing for lost, whilst Nature, and the Government of the World is in the Hands of God; nor despairs of better Times, whilst he can make the very Judgments he executes, the Means of introducing and establishing them. Should he be mistaken in this pleasing Prospect, should he see the Desolation of his Country, the Subversion of its Cities, and the Destruction of their Inhabitants; should he feel the Convulsions of a rocking World, should he behold the Mountains sinking into Ruins, the stormy Ocean pouring out all

all his Waves to overwhelm and level them, the Vault of Heaven rend with Thunder, the ruddy Lightning darting impetuous from one End of it to the other, carrying swift and irresistible Destruction under its Wings, and the Elements all on Fire melting with fervent Heat : Should he be a Witness to these tremendous Events, and find himself surrounded with these multiplied Terrors, and ready to bear his Part in this universal Subversion of Nature ; yet if he attended to his Principles, his Hopes, his Prospects, and the certain Consequences that shall finally take Place, he would triumph in those glorious Words of the Apostle : *Neither Life nor Death, nor Principalities nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature whatsoever, shall be able to separate me from the Love of God which is Christ Jesus my Lord*\*. Thus circumstanced, we may truly say of him with greater Reason, than the Poet of his Hero, in a Description of like Circumstances :

*Impavidum ferient Ruinae.*

He would calmly smile at the Terrors presented to him, sink fearless and resolute under these complicated Ruins ; and in his last Moments rejoice in the sure Prospect that he should finally survive them, and be restored to a State of the most durable Felicity ; when Time and this World shall be no more, and neither Fate nor Chance, no, nor what is of infinitely more Consequence, the Anger of God shall ever introduce a second Destruction. *Let all those therefore, O Lord, that put their Trust in thee rejoice ; let them ever shout for Joy, because thou defendest them : Let them that love thy Name be joyful in thee : For thou Lord wilt bless the Righteous ; with Favour wilt thou compass him as with a Shield*†.

\* Rom. viii. 38, 39.

+ Ps. v. 11, 12.

